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10/035,875	11/09/2001	Nicholas A. Thomas	13660.36	4335

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EXAMINER

LAstra, DANIEL

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3622

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/24/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/035,875

Applicant(s)

THOMAS ET AL.

Examiner

DANIEL LASTRA

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,8-13,15-17 and 21-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,8-13,15-17 and 21-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-6, 8-13, 15-17 and 21-29 have been examined. Application 10/035,875 (METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR ELECTRONIC COUPON ISSUANCE TRANSMISSION AND MANGEMENT) has a filing date 11/09/2001 and Claims Priority from Provisional Application 60247104 (11/10/2000).

Response to Amendment

2. In response to Final Rejection filed 07/24/2006, the Applicant filed an RCE on 10/24/2006, which amended claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 15, 17, 26 and 29.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3-11 and 13, 15-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fajkowski (U.S. 5,905,246).

As per claim 1, Fajkowski teaches:

A system for utilizing an electronic coupon, the system comprising a vendor computer device configured to utilize the electronic coupon to provide a benefit (see column 4, lines 15-64);

a vendor wireless communication device electrically coupled to the vendor computer device (see col 15, lines 45-55).

a purchaser computer device configured to communicate with the vendor computer device at a point of sale (see column 4, lines 15-64); and

a short-range *wireless* communications device coupled to the purchaser computer device *and in short-range wireless* communication with the vendor computer device at the point of sale (see column 15, lines 45-60); wherein at least one of (i) the vendor computer device and (ii) the purchaser computer device is configured to manage the electronic coupon (see column 4, lines 15-64). Fajkowski's periphery device 100 has a coupon card insertion port 104. Contained in said port 104 is a communication port 106 which would interface with communication 14 on coupon card. Communication port 106 is a light coupling device having a light emitting diode 145 and a light responsive transistor 146. When coupon card 1 is inserted into insertion port 104, a seating mechanism 105 (shown schematically by dashed lines in FIG. 13) within periphery device 100 will grasp coupon card 1 and position it to insure that periphery device light responsive transistor 146 may receive signals from coupon card light emitting diode 20, and that coupon card 1's light responsive transistor 21 may receive signals from periphery device 100's light emitting diode 145 (see col 15, lines 45-60). Fajkowski also teaches that "Communications port 14 is found on the back side of coupon card 1. In the embodiment shown, communications port 14 comprises a light coupling device having a light emitting diode 20 and a light responsive transistor 21. However, it is envisioned that communications port 14 could be any device for transmitting data that could carry out the functional requirements of the present invention. Such alternative communications ports may include infrared transceiver devices" (see col 9, lines 3-15).

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Applicant's specification page 19, lines 8-15 mentions that an example of a communication device that uses short-range communications includes an Infrared transceiver, such as an IrDA standard port. Therefore, because Fajkowski teaches that communication port 14 could be an infrared transceiver, where said transceiver is used to communicate with the vendor computer (*i.e.* periphery device) and the Applicant's specification mentions that an Infrared transceiver is one example of a device that communicates in short-range wireless communication, then Fajkowski discloses the claim limitation of a short-range wireless communications device (*i.e.* Infrared transceiver) coupled to the purchaser computer device (*i.e.* coupon card) and in short-range wireless communication with the vendor computer device (*i.e.* periphery device) at the point of sale.

As per claim 3, Fajkowski teaches:

A system as recited in claim 3, further comprising a secondary computer device configured to transceive the electronic coupon (see column 4, line 63 – column 5, line 38).

As per claim 4, Fajkowski teaches:

A system as recited in claim 1, wherein said secondary computing device is at least one of (i) a server; and (ii) a personal computer (see column 4, line 63 – column 5, line 38).

As per claim 5, Fajkowski teaches:

A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the purchaser computer device comprises at least one of (i) a cell phone; and (ii) a personal digital assistant (see column 6, lines 60-67).

As per claim 6, Fajkowski teaches:

A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the *short-range wireless* communications device employs wireless communication (see column 6, lines 60-67) *to transfer the electronic coupon to the vendor computer device* (see col 15, lines 45-65; col 9, lines 1-15).

As per claim 8, Fajkowski teaches:

In a system that includes a purchaser computer device, a vendor computer device, and an electronic coupon, a method for utilizing the electronic coupon, the method comprising the steps for:

providing the electronic coupon (see column 4, lines 15-64);

transmitting the electronic coupon from the purchaser computer device to the vendor computer device using a short-range wireless communication between the purchaser computer device and the vendor computer device (see col 9, lines 1-15; col 15, lines 45-65);

determining the validity of using the electronic coupon (see column 4, lines 14-64; col 17, lines 1-21);

if the electronic coupon is determined to be valid for use, providing a benefit to a user (see column 4, lines 14-64; col 17, lines 1-65);

determining the validity of using a second electronic coupon; comparing the electronic coupon with the second electronic coupon to determine which electronic coupon is preferred, wherein the benefit provided to the user corresponds to the preferred electronic coupon (see column 17, lines 1-21; col 19, lines 39-67).

As per claim 9, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the electronic coupon is provided from the purchaser computer device to the vendor computer device (see column 4, lines 14-64).

As per claim 10, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the step for providing comprises at least one of the steps for:

- (i) scanning the electronic coupon (see column 3, lines 50-67);
- (ii) transmitting the electronic coupon via a wireless communication connection (see column 4, lines 6, lines 60-67); and
- (iii) transmitting the electronic coupon via a hard-wired communication connection (see column 6, lines 20-30).

As per claim 11, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the step for determining comprises the step for verifying the identity of the user (see column 4, lines 1-8).

As per claim 13, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the electronic coupon is provided from a secondary computer device (see column 5, lines 15-64).

As per claim 15, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the step for comparing includes at least one of the steps for:

- (i) examining an expiration date (see column 19, lines 50-67); and
- (ii) determining which provides a greater benefit (see column 19, lines 50-67).

As per claim 16, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the greater benefit is determined based on at least one of:

- (i) promptness in redemption;
- (ii) frequency of purchase;
- (iii) type of payment employed;
- (iv) one or more products presented for purchase;
- (v) one or more manufacturers of products presented for purchase; and
- (vi) one or more vendors of products presented for purchase (see column 19, lines 15-67).

As per claim 17, Fajkowski teaches:

In a system that includes a first electronic coupon, a first computer device that provides the first electronic coupon, a second computer device that receives the first electronic coupon, *and a third computer device that receives the first electronic coupon*, a method for distributing the first electronic coupon, the method comprising the steps for:

providing the first electronic coupon at the first computer device (see column 4, lines 15-64), wherein the step for providing the first electronic coupon comprises the steps for populating a database on a server with a plurality of downloadable electronic coupons, wherein the first electronic coupon is one of the plurality of downloadable electronic coupons (see column 5, lines 15-65);

selectively transmitting the first electronic coupon from the first computer device to the second computer device to enable a benefit to be provided to a user of the second computer device (see column 4, lines 15-64); wherein the step for selectively transmitting comprises the steps for:

providing access to the database (see column 6, lines 20-30);

receiving a request for downloading the first coupon from the data base (see column 6, lines 20-30); and downloading the first electronic coupon to in response to the request (see column 6, lines 20-30), wherein the request is initiated automatically based on preset criteria (see column 6, lines 60-67)

and selectively transmitting the first electronic coupon from the second computer device to the third computer device using a short-range wireless communication (see col 13, lines 55-65). Fajkowski teaches transferring coupon data wirelessly between different coupon cards.

As per claim 21, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 19, wherein the request is selectively initiated by at least one of

(i) the user (see column 6, lines 60-67);

- (ii) a vendor;
- (iii) a manufacturer of a product; and
- (iv) a provider of a service.

As per claim 22, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 19, wherein the step for downloading is performed across the Internet (see column 6, lines 20-30).

As per claim 23, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the step for selectively transmitting is performed across a wireless communication (see column 6, lines 60-67).

As per claim 24, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the first electronic coupon is an electronic data file stored locally on the second computer device (see column 6, lines 60-67).

As per claim 25, Fajkowski teaches:

A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the first electronic coupon is an electronic reference location on a network that references the first computer device to a location where the electronic coupon is stored (see column 6, lines 20-30).

As per claim 26, Fajkowski teaches:

A computer program product for implementing within a computer system a method for utilizing an electronic coupon, the computer program product comprising: computer readable medium for providing computer program code means utilized to

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implement the method, wherein the computer program code means is comprised of executable code for implementing the steps for:

providing the electronic coupon (see column 4, lines 15-64);

transmitting the electronic coupon from a purchaser computer device to a vendor computer device using a short-range wireless communication between the purchaser computer device and the vendor computer device (see col 9, lines 1-15; col 15, lines 45-60);

determining the validity of using the electronic coupon (see column 4, lines 15-64; col 17, lines 1-22);

if the electronic coupon is determined to be valid for use, providing a benefit to a user (see column 4, lines 15-64); determining the validity of using a second electronic coupon; and comparing the electronic coupon with the second electronic coupon to determine which electronic coupon is preferred, wherein the benefit provided to the user corresponds to the preferred electronic coupon (see column 17, lines 1-65; col 19, lines 39-67).

As per claim 27, Fajkowski teaches:

The computer program product as recited in claim 26, further comprising computer program code means comprised of executable code for implementing the step for tracking information (see column 5, lines 15-64).

As per claim 28, Fajkowski teaches:

The computer program product as recited in claim 26, further comprising computer program code means comprised of executable code for implementing the step

for providing a notification relating to the electronic coupon (see column 24, lines 20-55).

As per claim 29, Fajkowski teaches:

A computer program product for implementing within a computer system a method for distributing the electronic coupon, the computer program product comprising: computer readable medium for providing computer program code means utilized to implement the method, wherein the computer program code means is comprised of executable code for implementing the steps for:

providing the electronic coupon at a first computer device (see column 4, lines 15-64);

selectively transmitting the electronic coupon from the first computer device to a second computer device to enable a benefit to be provided to a user of the second computer device (see column 4, lines 15-64);

selectively transmitting the electronic coupon from the second computer device to a third computer device using a short-range wireless communication (see col 13, lines 55-67). Fajkowski teaches the wireless transfer of coupon data between different coupon cards (see figure 8).

determining the validity of using a second electronic coupon and comparing the electronic coupon with the second electronic coupon to determine which electronic coupon is preferred, wherein the benefit provided to the user corresponds to the preferred electronic coupon (see column 17, lines 1-65; col 19, lines 39-67).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fajkowski (US 5,905,246) in view of Kepecs (US 6,330,543).

As per claims 2 and 12, Fajkowski teaches:

A system as recited in claim 1, but fails to teach further comprising a biometric input device coupled to the purchaser computer device for positive identification of a user. However, Kepecs teaches a system that uses biometric identification for positive identification of a user (see column 12, lines 5-15). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the application was made, to know that Fajkowski would use the Kepecs's biometric identification system to allow the provider of the coupon card services to identify each individual to whom a coupon card is registered. Biometric identification would replace the use of identification numbers to positive identify users.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 10/24/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicant argues that the amended claims require wireless

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communication on both the purchaser and vendor devices, and to further require that the devices be in short-range wireless communication with each other and that Fajkowski does not teach these limitations because according to the Applicant, Fajkowski teaches a coupon card that must be physically inserted into a point of sale device for communication and coupon transfer to occur. The Applicant further argues that the only wireless communication to the coupon card taught by Fajkowski is a pager-type long range communication between a coupon server and the coupon card that transmits coupons to the card. The Examiner answers that Fajkowski teaches the wireless transfer of coupon data between different coupon cards (see col 13, lines 55-67). Furthermore, Fajkowski teaches a periphery device 100 has a coupon card insertion port 104. Contained in said port 104 is a communication port 106 which would interface with communication 14 on coupon card. Communication port 106 is a light coupling device having a light emitting diode 145 and a light responsive transistor 146. When coupon card 1 is inserted into insertion port 104, a seating mechanism 105 (shown schematically by dashed lines in FIG. 13) within periphery device 100 will grasp coupon card 1 and position it to insure that periphery device light responsive transistor 146 may receive signals from coupon card light emitting diode 20, and that coupon card 1's light responsive transistor 21 may receive signals from periphery device 100's light emitting diode 145 (see col 15, lines 45-60). Fajkowski also teaches that "Communications port 14 is found on the back side of coupon card 1. In the embodiment shown, communications port 14 comprises a light coupling device having a light emitting diode 20 and a light responsive transistor 21. However, it is envisioned

that communications port 14 could be any device for transmitting data that could carry out the functional requirements of the present invention. Such alternative communications ports may include infrared transceiver devices" (see col 9, lines 3-15). Applicant's specification page 19, lines 8-15 mentions that an example of a communication device that uses short-range communications includes an Infrared transceiver, such as an IrDA standard port. Therefore, contrary to Applicant's argument, because Fajkowski teaches that communication port 14 could be an infrared transceiver, where said transceiver is used to communicate with the vendor computer (*i.e.* periphery device) and the Applicant's specification mentions that an Infrared transceiver is one example of a device that communicates in short-range wireless communication, then Fajkowski teaches the limitation of a short-range wireless communications device (*i.e.* Infrared transceiver) coupled to the purchaser computer device (*i.e.* coupon card) and in short-range wireless communication with the vendor computer device (*i.e.* periphery device) at the point of sale.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL LASTRA whose telephone number is 571-272-6720 and fax 571-273-6720. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6:00.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, ERIC W. STAMBER can be reached on 571-272-6724. The official Fax number is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DL
Daniel Lastra

January 6, 2007


RAQUEL ALVAREZ
PRIMARY EXAMINER